

07/05/2001

PM on varsity intake quota

Patrick Sennyah

PETALING JAYA, Sun. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he is leaving it to the people to decide whether or not there should be a quota on the intake of students into the universities.

"The Government is prepared to consider their wishes if it is in their interest," the Prime Minister said.

He said the Government was always doing its utmost to serve the people.

"If they feel that the quota is not good and do not want it anymore, then the Government can do away with it," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this after opening the "dinosaurs alive" exhibition at the Summit USJ here.

He was commenting on a statement by Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob yesterday that unfilled university seats reserved for Bumiputeras should be given to non-Bumiputera students who scored 10As, 9As or 8As in their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia.

Adnan had said that while there were 7,168 unfilled seats under the Bumiputera quota, there were about 500 non-Bumiputera students who scored top marks, but could not get a place in the local universities.

The intake ratio of Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras set by the Government is 55:45.

Dr Mahathir said the Bumiputeras must accept the fact that if they were not interested in utilising the opportunities given to them, then they did not have the right to prevent others from using those opportunities.

"There are those who think that since they are not interested, others should also be prevented from gaining entry.

"This is totally unacceptable. Throughout the 43 years of independence we have provided various opportunities for Bumiputeras, such as opening up more universities and so on," he said.

He said that if they have no interest in grabbing the opportunities provided to them, then the opportunities should be given to others.

He said currently many professional non-Bumiputeras are being wooed by foreign countries keen on tapping their capabilities.

"Considering this, we will face a brain-drain if educational opportunities for non-Bumiputeras are restricted," he added.